1609/4952.

THE STATE OF THE NATION CONSIDERED,

With respect to a

FRENCH INVASION.

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" THIS is a new and ingenious
" Court-Satire, not in Verſe, but
" in excellent Proſe. We do not care
" to enter upon any particular Expla-
" nation of ſuch a Pamphlet, but ſhall
" venture to recommend this, in the
" groſs, as the prettieſt Piece of Irony
" we have ſeen for ſome Time paſt."

See Monthly Review *for* April, 1756.

BRITISH MUSEUM 15 73 JUN

THE STATE OF THE NATION, &c.

WHEN a Nation has been terrified with falſe Alarms, the Credit of true ones will gradually diminiſh. Time, which diſcovers Truth, makes us aſhamed of groundleſs Fears. But the Experience of twelve Months paſt has ſhewn, that Time is not our only Reliance in this Caſe. It requires Thought and Recollection, to reſiſt the Impreſſion, which Men in a Panic make upon each other.

WE have long been apprehenſive of an Invaſion from *France*. Repeated Accounts from the *French* Coaſt have confirmed our Fears. The Government has wiſely prepared for the Reception of the Enemy. But, even the Armaments for our Defence have heightened our Senſe of the Danger.

As there are not many, who look farther than their own perſonal Concerns, it is Matter of no great Aſtoniſhment, that ſo many ſhould be miſled in what ſeems to concern them, only in common with their Country. And as it is unnatural to ſome Men, and unpleaſant to others, to think and reflect, the greater Part of us have choſen, rather to be frightened out of their Senſes, than to haraſs their Minds with Inquiries into the real State of the Danger.

However, the Bulk of Mankind do not deſerve the Ridicule, to which the Event in theſe Caſes may ſeem to expoſe them. Very few of us know much of the internal Strength of both Nations; whether the *French* are in Condition to attempt an Invaſion; and how far the preſent State of this Kingdom favours the Deſign; yet both theſe Queſtions ſhould be aſked, before we terrify ourſelves and others, with Dangers which may prove imaginary.

Whilst every real Friend to his Country will contibute his Share towards averting the Evils he apprehends, it may be of ſome Uſe to lay before the Public ſuch Conſiderations, as may diſſipate the Fear. There is Merit in not deſpairing of the Commonwealth; and tho' every Man may be miſtaken, in prognoſticating Contingencies; yet the Miſtakes, which are founded in Candour and Benevolence, and tend to cheriſh and comfort a whole Nation, are at leaſt intituled to Pardon.

How far the *French* are in Condition to attempt an Invaſion, is beſt known to thoſe great Perſonages among us, who are minutely acquainted with the Secrets of the *French* Cabinet, with the State of the Finances, of the Army, and the Navy of *France*. They know as well, what Schemes the Enemy is meditating, and capable of executing, as what Meaſures it is right and expedient for themſelves to take. But this Knowledge, which our Miniſters undoubtedly

undoubtedly poſſeſs in a conſummate Degree, will not alone determine the Point. The Queſtion will ſtill remain, Whether this Kingdom be the proper Spot for the Exertion of the Power of *France*? Unleſs this ſhould appear, from a View of the Temper and Diſpoſition of our own People, from the State of the Government, and the Characters of thoſe who adminiſter it, our Fears will make as indifferent a Figure, before the Invaſion, as Puſillanimity would, after the Enemy is landed.

The Circumſtances, requiſite to fit a Nation for Submiſſion to an Invader, are full as many in Number as thoſe which are requiſite to make a vigorous Defence. The Nation muſt be in great Meaſure defenceleſs. Her Troops muſt be imaginary, Paper-Troops, which, though it is become a military Term, is found by Experience to be not quite ſo ſignificant in War, as in Peace.

The Invader muſt have ſome Reliance upon a conſiderable Number of the People. He muſt know their Paſſions to be alienated from their Country, from the Conſtitution and the Government of it. He muſt be well aſſured of a Diſpoſition to receive them as a Deliverer, eſpecially in an Iſland; for he cannot hope for Succeſs, where he is univerſally conſidered as an Enemy.

Or the whole Body of the People muſt be ſo notoriouſly corrupt, as to be ripe for a Sale of their Country. The Leaders muſt be mercenary, and the Nation in general muſt be venal, before the Enemy can make an Impreſſion. This Venality muſt be attended with ſuch a Degree of Stupidity, as hinders them from comparing the Price with the Purchaſe. They muſt be ready to ſacrifice any thing but their Lives and perſonal Proſpects, to ſome immediate infamous Advantage.

Besides all this, the Invader muſt depend not only upon the Venality of the Leaders, but upon the natural Diſpoſition of ſome of them, whether it be

founded in the Prejudices of Education, or in Hereditary Prejudices, or in an Ambition, which cannot be fully gratified without a Revolution. He muſt depend too upon the Temper of a great Number of the People, either as ſenſible of ſome legal Oppreſſion, or as diſpoſed, by an Indifference, ſtudiouſly inculcated, to their own Conſtitution, to embrace with Alacrity the Changes he promiſes to introduce.

And thoſe, whom he corrupts, muſt be dealt with before-hand. The Bargain muſt be concerted by Emiſſaries. A Correſpondence muſt be carried on by Connivance; for it can hardly eſcape Diſcovery, unleſs it has been previouſly carried on with thoſe, who may have Power to prevent the Deſign.

These, and many other Difficulties, would diſcourage a Nation of Heroes from embarking an Army. And will it be ſaid, that this is a genuine Deſcription of the People of *Great Britain?* It could not decently be ſaid, if it were true. But as it is notoriouſly the Reverſe of the Character of this Nation, what Apology ſhall we make for thoſe, who are anxious about Dangers, which muſt have ſome ſuch Foundation, as the State of Things here repreſented, before they can really exiſt.

However, ſome Allowance muſt be made for natural Timidity, and ſome for that contagious Kind, which is too rapid in its Progreſs, to admit of Reflections upon the internal State of the Kingdom. I ſhall, therefore, inſtead of reproaching my Countrymen, comfort them, with the cleareſt Evidence, that they have nothing to apprehend from the Enemy; for a People ſo diſpoſed, and ſo circumſtanced, as this Nation will appear to be, will not probably be Conquered, though they ſhould be Invaded.

There are not many Nations more inflexibly Uncorrupt, than the Inhabitants of this Iſland. Whether it be the Effect of Trade, or of the Proſperity

perity which follows it, the People are mighty little acquainted with Indirect Ways of acquiring Wealth. Hence it is our Happineſs, that they have the Election of their Repreſentatives in Parliament. Foreigners ſtand amazed to ſee the Diſintereſtedneſs, which diſtinguiſhes the Nation on ſuch Occaſions, it being not only certain, that there are very few Inſtances of Corruption upon Record, but that even the Suſpicion of it is guarded againſt, by the Multitude of Oaths that are taken. That Gentlemen are very ambitious of the Honour of repreſenting ſo pure and upright a Body of Men, is not at all inconſiſtent with this Character of the People; for the Candidate never ventures to build his Hopes of Succeſs, in Publick at leaſt, upon any other Ground, than a ſtrong Profeſſion, ſubſcribed by himſelf, of his invariable Attachment to the Intereſt of his Country.

From the Electors let us turn our Eyes to the Elected. Their Truſt being of a Nature highly Valuable, they have no ſooner eſtimated it duly, than they reſolve to Diſcharge it. In order thereto, they weigh, with the cloſeſt Attention, and the pureſt Impartiality, every the moſt remote Argument relating to national Points, before they determine, on which Side it becomes them to Vote. The Fatigue of Attendance may impair the Judgment, and the Perplexity of Arguments may ſometimes keep the Underſtanding in Suſpence; but the Merit is the greater, when upon a Diviſion it appears, that the Queſtion hath been Rightly decided, by an eminent Majority. This compenſates for all the Patience requiſite to hear the Arguments, which are, Ineffectually, urged by the Minority.

If the Great and Powerful ſhould chance to have a favorite Point to carry, they can have but one Method of ſupporting it, the Weight and Solidity

of their Reaſons. It would be the greateſt of all Abſurdities, to ſuppoſe a faithful Repreſentative of the People influenced by Hope or Fear. The Proofs which are laid before him muſt Overpower him, before he aſſents, for his Judgment cannot yield to trifling Arguments.

But if there were in his Mind ſome latent Infirmity, which might incline him to an open undue Influence, yet the Queſtion could not be affected by ſuch Infirmity, unleſs he had a Standard to reſort to. The Hands, from which only the Temptation could proceed, will not, Profeſſedly, adminiſter it, Themſelves and their Meaſures being ſuperior to any ſuch Support.

Nor would the Fear of Diſpleaſure be better grounded, than the Hope of Reward. The Parliament being free, every Member of it is ſo. And as no one can be ſaid to have received or expected any Emolument, in Conſideration for his Vote; ſo neither can it be affirmed, that any one has been removed from an Office of Truſt, or Profit, or Honour, in Conſequence of his Parliamentary Conduct.

If future Hiſtorians do Juſtice to our Days, we ſhall make a noble Figure in the Eyes of Poſterity. Whilſt the King of *France* is baniſhing his Parliament, for contravening his Will and Pleaſure, a *Britiſh* Senate continues ſo unmoleſted in the Liberty of ſpeaking, that Men in Power, far from reſenting, magnanimouſly approve of the Reſolutions taken, after a long and warm Debate.

This uncorrupt State of the Parliament renders that auguſt Body univerſally reſpected. Their Reſolutions are in themſelves an Evidence of the Rectitude of a Meaſure; and it is no ſmall Comfort to thoſe, who have not Underſtanding to ſee the various Utilities of Parliamentary Proceedings, that they

they have ſuch abundant Reaſon to confide in the Wiſdom and Integrity of their Repreſentatives.

HENCE the whole Nation wears one general Aſpect of Contentment. The Increaſe of a Debt of Eighty Millions, gives not indeed ſo univerſal a Satisfaction, as might ariſe from the Reduction of a Tax; but the leſs the Reaſons in Caſes of that Kind are underſtood, the ſtronger is the Confidence in thoſe, who Act and Reaſon above the Reach of vulgar Capacities.

SOME Meaſures will perplex the Judgments of the moſt paſſive Obſervers of public Tranſactions. It is not an eaſy Matter, for Inſtance, to comprehend the Utility of the late Treaty with *Ruſſia*. That 55,000 Men are hired to invade and plunder the Territory of an Ally, may be very Wiſe and Politic; but the Wiſdom and Policy of it are not immediately, at firſt Sight, obvious. That a ſubſequent Treaty is concluded with that Ally, to render thoſe 55,000 Men uſeleſs, gives ſomewhat more Light into the Matter, but ſtill leaves the Queſtion, in ſome Degree, undecided, why they were ever hired? That 79,000 Men are conſidered as the neceſſary *Britiſh Quota*, towards the Defence of any Part of the Empire, is a difficult Problem. How twelve Ships of the Line ſhall be ſpared, in return for 12,000 Men, and how 140,000 Pounds annually ſhall be paid for only the Promiſe of 67,000 Men, at a Time, when our Credit is ſomewhat ſtretched in the Loan of no more than two Millions, for neceſſary *Britiſh* Purpoſes, is not perfectly clear and intelligible. But there is one Argument, which quiets the Minds of a People, ſo unanimouſly diſpoſed to Contentment. The Treaties with *Ruſſia* and *Heſſe-Caſſel*, have received the Approbation of as EMINENT a MAJORITY, as could have been wiſhed, had their Utilities been much more Manifeſt.

THIS

THIS contented State of the Nation is not in the leaſt a Matter of Wonder, if we conſider how ſtrict a Regard is paid to the Intereſts of the People, in Inſtances, which may in the leaſt affect their conſtitutional Rights. Fundamental Laws are treated as Sacred and Inviolable. No public Perſons will venture to give their Aſſent to a Breach of them, or of any Clauſe in them, whilſt Parliaments ſubſiſt; it being extremely perilous for the greateſt Subject to fall under the Diſpleaſure of thoſe jealous Aſſertors of the Rights of the People.

THE publick Money is ſcrupulouſly applied to the Uſes to which it is appropriated. Even in a real Exigency, a Miſapplication would not be hazarded; and conſequently in a Caſe where the Exigency is doubtful, the Payment would be deferred, till the Repreſentatives of thoſe, whoſe Money it is, had been regularly conſulted. If any great Officer of the Revenue ſhould with-hold his Concurrence from a contrary Meaſure, he would not only receive the Applauſe of the People, but his Fidelity would naturally be rewarded by ſtrong Marks of the Favour of the Crown.

THE only Recommendation to an Office of Truſt is the Qualification of the Candidate. Indeed Candidates are not very numerous. The Crowds, which are obſerved to attend the Levees of the Great, are led thither by mere perſonal Devotion and Reſpect. There is a Pleaſure in admiring an exalted Character; and thoſe who have a Taſte for heroic Virtues, take ſuch Opportunities of gratifying it. Men of Merit are ſought out, and dragged from their Obſcurity, to be Witneſſes of the diſintereſted Diſpoſition of public Favours. Promiſes are very ſeldom made, and when made, are moſt religiouſly obſerved; it being needleſs to gain Friends by a Traffic with Words, when the good

Will

Will of the whole Nation is ſo effectually ſecured by Meaſures.

As Men of Merit increaſe, it is fit there ſhould be a proportionable Increaſe of Rewards. And tho' this may chance to be attended with the Inconvenience of dividing an Office, in a Country where Offices are ſo unſufferably ſcarce, yet a Step of that Kind is never taken, without the moſt tender Regard to thoſe Fundamental Laws, which ſecure the People againſt an Increaſe of the Power of the Crown.

The Adminiſtration conſiſts of Men of the Pureſt Morals, of the Greateſt Fortunes, of the moſt Diſtinguiſhed Abilities, and of the ſoundeſt Principles in the Kingdom. The great Minds, which, with a perfect Harmony and Union, compoſe the Miniſtry, will immediately diſcern, that this is not meant to flatter them. They never ſtruggled for Power, and were never tenacious of it. It devolved into their Hands, in the natural Courſe of Things; and whenever it ſlides out of their Hands, the Change too will be natural, for no Act of theirs will be wilfully calculated to forward it.

They have the Aſſiſtance of the ableſt Men in every Profeſſion, particularly in that honourable Profeſſion, without the Help of which Laws might be miſinterpreted by the mere Rules of common Senſe. For it is ſcarce credible, how much the right Interpretation of Laws depends upon a Habit of diſtinguiſhing, and ſometimes in Caſes, where the Diſtinction doth not ariſe ſo viſibly from a real Difference in the Subject, as from the Acuteneſs of thoſe, whoſe Province it is to ſplit Words, and annihilate a plain Argument, by Dint of Refinement.

The Execution of Laws is as inflexibly Rigid, as the Manner of interpreting them is Critically Nice. No Offender of any Kind has a Chance to

eſcape

eſcape the utmoſt Severities of a Proſecution. Neither his Power, nor his Connexion with Men in Power, will in the leaſt avail him; for the Execution of his Sentence cannot depend upon any other Conſideration, than the Nature and Circumſtances of his Crime. This undeviating Juſtice with reſpect to Criminals, is in ſome Degree felt by immoral Men in general. Profligates of every Kind, even in high Life, are ſo much diſcountenanced, that an immoral Character would meet with as cool a Reception at a Levee, as an Inſignificant one. This Accounts in ſome Meaſure for that general Propenſity to Virtue, in every Part of the Kingdom, eſpecially in the Metropolis; inſomuch, that an Invader would be aſtoniſhed to find ſo few Men of abandoned Characters, or deſperate Fortunes, ready to avail themſelves of a publick Confuſion.

THE Diſpatch with which all national Affairs are tranſacted, is ſo remarkable, that foreign Courts have no other Way of accounting for it, than by ſuppoſing our Miniſters in one inceſſant Hurry. Every intereſting Intelligence is forthwith applied to the Benefit of the Public. We had a memorable Inſtance of this in the Advices which were received of the *French* Encroachments in *America*. The moſt effectual Meaſures were immediately taken to ſtop the Progreſs of the Enemy, as ſoon as it was known that a Fort had been erected upon the *Britiſh* Territory.

THE Meaſures to ſecure Dominions, unconnected with *Great Britain*, are indeed ſaid to have been taken before any due Proviſion had been made to ſecure the *Britiſh* Dominions. But the Inference to be drawn from hence does Honour to our Adminiſtration, for it is an Evidence, that the Principles of Juſtice and Gratitude are more active in their Breaſts, than the national Part of the Principle of Self-Preſervation.

THERE

THERE are beſides uncommon Marks of Wiſdom in this Piece of Conduct. It was neceſſary to Contract the Danger, which appeared ſo Extenſive, at the Beginning of the Rupture. And though the Spot, whence it was driven, was not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, *Britiſh* Territory, yet by that ſeeming Diſperſion of our Strength, in the ſubſidiary Engagements on the Continent, we enjoy the national Glory, of having bid Defiance to the Enemy, by ſending abroad the Wealth, which ſhould defend us at Home. It was to all *Europe* a ſignal Inſtance of the Superiority of our Councils, as well as Riches. We have provided for a War on the Continent, which Meaſure proclaims our Strength; and if the Enemy ſhould find us not quite ſo powerfully ſecured at Home, yet he will be ſtruck with Terror at the Exceſs of our Courage and Reſolution.

DISAFFECTION, is a Word, of which the Meaning is very near forgot; for Names muſt die, when the Things ſignified by them ceaſe to exiſt. A great Majority of the WHIGS have laid aſide their Principles, and moſt of the TORIES have laid aſide their Profeſſion. It is an impertinent Inquiry, which Party has made the greater Sacrifice, ſince the happy Effect of theſe mutual Conceſſions hath been, that the Principles of the WHIGS, and the Name of the TORIES, no longer obſtruct the Peace and Unanimity of this Nation. Some little Diſtinction will ſtill ſubſiſt; but it amounts to no more than this, that WHIGS are characterized by their Conformity to TORIES; and TORIES are known by the Officiouſneſs with which they aſſume the NAME of WHIGS.

THE Bone of Contention being thus broken, the Exceſſes of either Side are no longer alarming. If a WHIG ſhould plead the Cauſe of the Conſtitution, with a Sublimity of Thought and Language, which could not flow merely from Abilities, natural or acquired,

quired, which muſt therefore be the Effuſion of a Heart warmed with Zeal for his Country, the general Obſervation would be, that he makes no Impreſſion. If a Gentleman of oppoſite Principles ſhould ſlip inadvertently into his old Profeſſions, it is probable, that he likewiſe would make no Impreſſion. He would excite neither Caution, nor Suſpicion; it being evident beyond all Doubt, that the Number of ſuſpicious Men in this Kingdom is now reduced to Units.

HENCE it is juſtly deemed Slander to impute to any Man Unconſtitutional Principles. The only poſſible Support of ſuch a Charge muſt be legal Evidence, which cannot in every Caſe be produced, and might be refuted by this Conſideration, that Perſons of all Principles, as well as Perſons of none, are known to be ready and willing to enter into the Service of the Government.

BUT beſides all this, the Futility of ſuch a Charge would appear from the Number and the SINCERITY of CONVERTS, who having changed their Profeſſion upon no other Motive than the ſober Conviction of their own Minds, may be, and are, as confidently relied on, as the moſt known active Friends to our happy Eſtabliſhment. The Hiſtory of Converts of all Kinds is a ſtanding Evidence of this Truth. They are ſometimes ſo extravagant in their Zeal, that one might ſuſpect them of intending to burleſque their new Syſtem, were it not an undoubted Fact, that their Minds are totally diveſted of the old one.

To account for the Force, with which a Converſion operates, is not an eaſy Taſk; nor does it fall directly within the Deſign of this Piece. It ſufficiently manifeſts the Strength of our preſent Conſtitution, to obſerve that we have many Converts, and ſome ſo eminent for their Departure from the ſtrongeſt Bias, that they are now, in this Time

of

of Danger, more the Objects of Confidence, than even thoſe whoſe Integrity was never Blemiſhed, never Suſpected.

These ſeveral Obſervations upon the State of the Nation, it ſeemed expedient to lay before the Public at this Time, in order to abate, or, if poſſible, to remove our Fears. Had it been at all the Deſign of the Writer to be ludicrous, he might have furniſhed much higher Entertainment for his Countrymen, by deſcribing the Terrors of a *French* Army, when reſiſted by the firſt Village after their Landing; or the ridiculous Figure they will make, in their March to the Capital, as Priſoners of War. But as the Subject will not decently admit of Ridicule, it may be a more ſolid Foundation for Courage, to repreſent the happy State of the Nation, in a true Light.

To treat an Enemy contemptuouſly, who might, if we were not thus internally invincible, ſoon ſhew us, how much we were miſtaken in our Opinion both of ourſelves and him, is Vanity, not Courage. But to ſurvey the Kingdom, the Character of the People, and of their Governors; and upon finding, that we have a Security unknown to former Ages, or other Nations, to take Courage and repel the Audacious Invader, this is Manly *Britiſh* Fortitude.

A Nation ſo conſtituted, ſo governed, ſo well diſpoſed, ſo well contented and ſo well affected, as every Man in *Great Britain* is at this Period, has nothing to fear. The Enemy will find himſelf reduced to the Exerciſe of mere Brute Force, which never yet prevailed againſt Wiſdom and Virtue, againſt Union and Public Spirit. Whilſt the People have ſo much Reaſon to be ſatisfied with the Integrity and Diſintereſtedneſs of their Rulers, there is no Doubt, but they will ſacrifice their Vitals upon the Occaſion. How much the Great will ſacrifice, depends upon another Queſtion, how much they have?

have? Their Lives they will certainly conſider as a Trifle, if we may judge from the Pleaſure they take in endangering their Lives, upon Occaſions much leſs noble, than the Defence of their Country; and, conſidering how precarious and infirm the vital Subſtance of moſt of thoſe Great Perſonages is! As to their Fortunes, they will lay them at the King's Feet, in a Purſe, as chearfully, as in an Addreſs. Thoſe who diſſipate their Fortunes, can hardly be ſaid to value them; and thoſe who make their Inheritance depend upon the Caſt of a Dye, will doubtleſs not be over tenacious of it, when their Country is at Stake. Their Public Emoluments they may perhaps not treat with quite the ſame Indifference. It is well known, that every Man's Salary is an Acquiſition of his own, and is therefore extremely dear to him, eſpecially as it is a genuine Image of his Merit. But conſidering the Probity and Public Spirit of the Times, as they are above repreſented, it is to the higheſt Degree improbable, that any Man will, in a Time of Danger, make a Property of his Country; or that a Set of Heroes, who diſdain the Conſideration of Life and Fortune, ſhould traiterouſly ſtipulate an Equivalent for their Places and Penſions.

FINIS.

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